

## PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**DATE:** January 2022

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### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATES:

**Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan:** With the close of Community Survey #4 on January 10, PARD and the consultant team prepare to present several illustrative plans in Community Meeting #4. The meeting will take place via Zoom on Tuesday, February 15. During the meeting, the project team will present concepts that bring together ideas from previous alternatives and cumulative community input. A second series of thematic small group discussions is outlined to follow Community Meeting #4. Members of the PARD planning and community engagement teams have continued to supplement efforts with additional pop-up opportunities and outreach to increase representation of all districts. **District 5 and 8** <https://www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision>  
Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 6 p.m.

[Zoom Meeting Registration](#)

[Project Webpage](#)

**Ridgeline Neighborhood Park Survey:** The project team for the Ridgeline Neighborhood Park Project (formerly Lakeline Neighborhood Park) held the first community meeting on January 6. As a follow-up to the meeting, and online survey is available through January 31, and PARD will be hosting outdoor outreach opportunities for Austin residents who live near the park.

[Survey link](#)

[Project Webpage](#)

### PLANNING UPDATES:

**Project Connect:** PARD staff continue to collaborate with the Project Connect and Blue and Orange Line teams. Recent activity includes:

- Meetings with the Line teams focused on team research, which will inform the Draft Environmental Impact Statements as part of the NEPA Process.
- Meetings with Project Connect and PARD's legal representatives will be set up to cover park-focused issues, such as accounting for parkland that is proposed to be taken or impacted, process for takings, and fair mitigation for all takings.
- PARD staff took part in a discussion on the potential for bus travel on the Blue Line bridge. PARD reiterated desire to be in the selection process for Bridge Design Competition / RFP.
- A special (virtual) meeting on Waller Boathouse was held on January 12.
- Thirty percent (30%) drawings for the Orange Line were shared on January 13. Staff has roughly 2 weeks to review and will refer to 15% comments as part of that review.

More information can be found at the project website: <https://www.capmetro.org/project-connect>

**305 S. Congress "Statesman" Planned Unit Development Amendment (PUD):** The item was heard by the Planning Commission on December 14. Commissioners asked questions of PARD staff related to parkland. Commissioners wanted additional time to consider the PUD and postponed the item to the

next Planning Commission meeting on February 8. In the meantime, a working group of Planning Commissioners is meeting weekly. PARD and staff from other Department's will continue to attend these meetings. **District 9**

**Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park:** Signage was installed at the nature play spaces at Walnut Creek Metro Park to help educate the public about the activities permitted in the area. As a pilot, these signs will be assessed to determine if they are appropriate for all future nature play spaces. **District 4**



New signs installed at Walnut Creek Metro Park

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

**Dougherty Arts Center Replacement Project:** The Dougherty Arts Center (DAC) project team is seeking City Council action for additional contract authority on the prime architectural contract with local Austin firm, Studio8 Architects, on January 27. The requested increase of spending authority will provide for completion of design services all the way through construction delivery of the project. The DAC project received Council approval to proceed with design and construction in May 2021 and is currently in the design development phase. The Council item is sponsored by the Capital Contracting Office (CCO). As the project design solidifies and the project budget is reconciled, the project team is tentatively planning for a community update meeting in March of 2022. **District 5**

**Town Lake Metro Park Holly-Festival Vision Plan Implementation Phase 1 - Lakefront Trail:** Notice to Proceed (NTP) was issued to Muniz Concrete and Contracting to begin work January 10, 2022 on the new 12' wide concrete trail through the 9 acres ceded to PARD from the Holly Austin Energy power plant. The Public Works Department Urban Trails Program (PWUTP) will remove sections of concrete and asphalt ahead of the construction to assist in alleviating some demolition contract cost. **District 3**

**Waterloo Greenway – Creek Delta (The Confluence):** Creek Delta, which is being developed via the City’s partnership with the Waterloo Greenway Conservancy and is co-sponsored by the Watershed Protection Department, is nearing completion of the design and permitting phase and preparing to be bid in spring 2022. On January 24, the project is scheduled to go before the Design Commission for a briefing and the ESB-MACC Advisory board for a requested update on project coordination with the ESB-MACC Phase 2 Improvements Project. On January 25, it will go before the Planning Commission for action to approve a conditional use permit for more than one acre of development on a public-zoned site. **District 1 and 9**

**Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC) Phase 2 Improvements:** The design team, Joint Venture Miro Rivera Architects and Tatiana Bilbao Estudio (JV MRA+TBE), was scheduled to present the Schematic Design to: the ESB-MACC Advisory Board on January 21 at City Hall during a Special Called Meeting that was to be televised on ATXN. This meeting was canceled and will be rescheduled. The design is also scheduled to be presented to the Design Commission and the Hispanic Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission on. Once regulatory approvals of the schematic design drawings are received, the project will move forward into Design Development. This project follows the guidelines as outlined in the Council-approved ESB-MACC Phase 2 Plan for building expansion and renovation. Site construction is anticipated to begin in late 2022 with a planned grand opening of the expanded and improved center planned for 2024. **District 9**

[www.austintexas.gov/MaccPhase2](http://www.austintexas.gov/MaccPhase2)



Site rendering, Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC) Phase 2 Improvements

**Sanchez Elementary Green School Park:** The Austin Parks Foundation awarded the Sanchez School Park a grant for a new water fountain and seating for the planned nature play area, scheduled to begin construction in Summer 2022. The nature-based features and other amenities are being implemented as part of the Green School Program and Austin’s Cities Connecting Children to Nature Initiative. **District 3**  
<https://austinparks.org/austin-parks-foundation-awards-over-75000-in-2021-fall-community-grants/>



**The Trail Foundation Rainey Street Trailhead:** The Trail Foundation is seeking a Site Development Permit for the Rainey Street Trailhead Project. As part of the permit requirements, The Trail Foundation provided a briefing on the trailhead design to the Waller Creek District Design Guidelines Committee on January 19, the Downtown Commission on January 19, and the Design Commission on January 24. The proposed design for the Rainey Street Trailhead includes improved access to the Butler Hike and Bike Trail, a nature play area, picnic areas, native plantings and an overlook dock on Ladybird Lake. <https://thetrailfoundation.org/portfolio/rainey-street-trailhead/>. **District 9**



Existing site conditions



Proposed view from Existing Trailhead  
(source: <https://thetrailfoundation.org/portfolio/rainey-street-trailhead/>)

## MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

**Barton Creek/Toomey Erosion Site Stabilization:** In May 2018, a slope failure occurred along the Barton Creek streambank adjacent to the Ann and Roy Butler Trail, opposite from Lou Neff Point. The affected area is approximately 215 feet in length. In early 2021, the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) authorized Freese and Nichols, Inc. (FNI) to provide a Feasibility Evaluation from Barton Springs Pool to Lady Bird Lake that includes an evaluation of the bank failure. FNI has submitted a draft report currently in review by staff. FNI is working on a proposal to submit to WPD to move the project into the design phase in 2022. The Trail Foundation will partner with PARD to engage the community about the work proposed and anticipated timelines. WPD is funding the design, permitting and slope repair.





Photo taken at site of slop failure

**Krieg Athletic Complex:** The Krieg Athletic Complex is receiving upgraded ball field lighting on fields 9-11. The three fields have had their existing lighting for at least 30 years. There are many advantages to replacing the old lights with Musco LED ball field lighting. The lights will provide better light levels for the games that are played under the lights. The energy efficient lights will also save money due to lower electric bills. As a result, there will be less light pollution and a 25-year warranty. These are additional benefits that we shall notice over the years. **District 3**



**Golf Facility Conditions:** The Golf Enterprise Fund is excited to announce all golf courses are in impeccable condition for golf. The unseasonably warm weather has introduced several challenges related to grass disease. The challenges have been mitigated through a careful watering program along with soil moisture monitoring. **All Districts**

**Zilker Botanical Garden:** The winter seasonal display has been installed at the Garden. The display features Violas, which are the herb of the year for 2022. In addition to winter annuals, hundreds of bulbs were planted that will emerge in the spring. Bulb plantings emphasize hardy *Amaryllis* as well as *Hyacinths*, which are the bulb of the year for 2022. **District 8**

**People Experiencing Homelessness Encampment Update:** Between the dates of October 25, 2021, and December 6, 2021, Park Rangers found these totals:

- 228 camps with an estimated population of 329 people.
- Of those sites 53 of the camps were marked as abandoned and ready for cleanup.
- 104 camps with an estimated population of 241 individuals are in high priority Level 4 camps.
- No camps were ranked level 5 or needing emergency attention.

**All Districts**



## PROGRAM/EVENT UPDATES:

**Holiday Tree Recycling at Zilker Metropolitan Park:** The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and Austin Resource Recovery partnered again for the 35<sup>th</sup> year of Christmas and holiday tree recycling to give trees another life through mulching. All Austin residents were invited to drop trees and wreaths free of tinsel and decorations on January 2, January 9, and January 10. Contactless drop off was encouraged and all staff and City volunteers wore masks to ensure safety during COVID Stage 5. An estimated 2,000 trees were collected, and mulch was offered free to the public on January 13 in the same location. Twenty trees were also given directly to Central Texas Pig Rescue. They attest their pigs love Christmas trees for both food and entertainment.



Volunteers and staff collected thousands of trees over three days

**Parent Nutrition Workshop and Fresh Food Distribution:** The Parks and Recreation Department partnered with Common Threads and Farmshare to provide Parent Nutrition Workshops at George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center and Gustavo "Gus" L. Garcia Recreation Center. Both recreation centers provided childcare while twenty-two parents were taught healthy eating habits at home, how to read food labels and how to navigate the grocery store. Each participant received a complimentary grocery box from Farmshare Austin's Fresh for Less program. Each box featured a mix of fresh produce items, eggs and healthy grocery staples.



**E.S.B. Mexican American Cultural Center – Holiday Posada Family Celebration:** The E.S.B. Mexican American Cultural Center hosted this family holiday event promoting Mexican traditions on December 15, 2021. The event was outdoors, with free tamales, piñata giveaways, and youth caroling. 300 people were in attendance.





### Asian American Resource Center –

#### Annual Senior Holiday Celebration:

This year's AARC annual senior holiday event was hosted on December 15, 2021 from 10 am-11:30 am, both in-person and virtually on Zoom to allow the seniors to safely celebrate. In person participants had their pictures with Santa and the AARC tree and watched the Austin Symphony Orchestra's string quartet's performance. Zoom participants were able to enjoy this performance live during that time as well. Prior to leaving, seniors received a take home lunch and stockings filled with crafts and handmade cards provided by The Collective and UT Volunteer group were distributed to all participants. PARD Senior Transportation helped deliver the stockings to our zoom registrants and provided transportation to some of our in-person participants. The event included 47 in person attendees, 6 virtual attendees, 12 AARC staff, 1 interpreter, 2 PARD CEU tabling, and 4 artists.



### Dougherty Arts Center – Annual Call for Exhibit Proposals for the 2023 Gallery Season:

The Dougherty Arts Center is now accepting Exhibit Proposals for the 2023 Gallery Season December 17, 2021-March 19, 2022! The Julia C. Buttridge Gallery celebrates a wide array of artists with diverse practices and strives to promote the livelihood of Austin's vital art culture by offering as many opportunities as possible to both emerging and established local artists. The submission process includes an Artist Statement, Exhibit Proposal, and images.

There is no fee to submit an exhibit proposal and all related exhibits and events are free and open to the public: <https://doughertyartscenter.submittable.com/submit>

**Oakwood Cemetery Chapel** completed a one semester research project that was a collaboration with the City of Austin’s Communications and Technology Management Department utilizing the new interlocal agreement between the City of Austin and the University of Texas at Austin. The Texas Immersive Institute utilized a cross-disciplinary class of graduate and undergraduate students, to create two project ideas for immersive games that teach users Texas history. [moody.utexas.edu/imagine](http://moody.utexas.edu/imagine). 10 students participated. In addition, Oakwood Cemetery Chapel received a special recognition award from Preservation Austin for the educational program “All Together Here” at an awards ceremony hosted at Symphony Square on December 2, 2021.

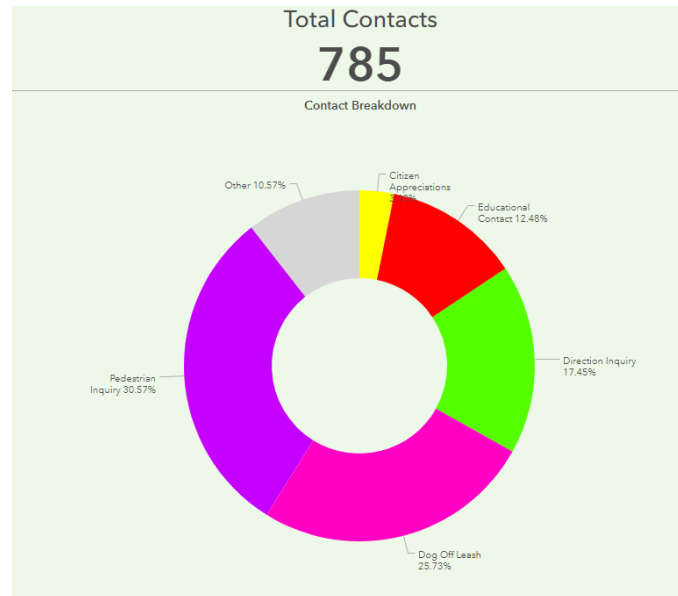


#### **Austin Nature & Science Center:**

- **Public Programs:** In-person Winter Break Camps were nearly full, with only one open space in the five to six years old program. The camps successfully maintained safety during the program following all COVID-19 safety precautions. Eleven children enrolled in five to six years old camp and 12 enrolled in the seven to eight years old camp.
- **Nature’s Way Preschool:** The preschool program continues to be successful despite serving a population that is unvaccinated. The staff frequently communicates with families to update them regarding the COVID safety precautions and are finding creative ways to keep the programming nearly 100% outdoors.
- **School Programs:** Schools continue to request programs at their school rather than onsite at the Austin Nature & Science Center. Although, there are significant staffing shortages the team is working very hard to meet the ongoing demand.
- **Camacho Activity Center:** In-person Winter Break Camp was 100% full. The camp successfully maintained safety during the program following all COVID-19 safety precautions. Camacho is also experiencing staffing shortages and the team is working flexible hours to cover programs. A total of 15 enrolled in the camp.

**Park Ranger Operations, December 10, 2021-January 10, 2022:** Park Rangers daily operations included 785 contacts regarding Laws, Safety, Service and Education. 202 contacts were logged for Dogs off leash during this time frame. Park Rangers began issuing warning notifications to individuals when dogs are off leash. This is being done after several months of outreach at Longview Park and The Mexican American Cultural Center focused on dog off leash education.

#### **Overall contact breakdown:**



Ranger Cormier with a New Bark Ranger



Ranger Rojas and Park Ranger Cadets on a winter Birding program

## ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

**Zilker Metropolitan Park Boating Concessions:** Staff is closely monitoring the progress of the Vision Plan process to determine any possible impact on existing concessions. The resolution of these outstanding matters will allow both PARD and the concessionaires to determine the best path forward for the management and operation of the boating concessions. In lieu of releasing an RFP to solicit vendors for these concessions (in light of the ongoing planning process), the current concessionaires will be given the opportunity for a two-year extension.



**Zilker Metropolitan Park Train Concession:** The Parks and Recreation Board received an update on January 5, 2021, regarding the execution of the Construction, Operations, and Maintenance Agreement for a Miniature Train Operation at Zilker Metropolitan Park with the Austin Parks Foundation (Foundation). The Foundation anticipates the amenity will commence operation in February 2022. The Foundation has a website that provides details on opening and activities related to the train at <https://www.zilkertrain.org/>.

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget Development:** January 2022 marks the start of preparation for the FY-2023 Financial Forecast and Annual Budget preparation. Here is the preliminary calendar from the COA Budget timeline:

CALENDAR	
January 20th	Budget Kickoff Meeting with Depts. <b>CANCELLED</b> <b>new date to be determined</b>
March	Revenue/Expenditure Forecast due from Depts.
<i>TBD</i>	<i>Council Briefing: Forecast Presentation</i>
May	5-year CIP Plan due from Depts.
May	Proposed Budget due from Depts.
<i>July</i>	<i>Proposed Budget Presentation to Council</i>
<i>Late July</i>	<i>Budget hearings</i>
<i>July-August</i>	<i>Council Budget Work Sessions</i>
<i>Mid-August</i>	<i>Tax Rate Hearing and Budget Readings</i>

**Aquatics Training:** The Aquatics Division began training summer management staff with its first Headguard/Manager training of the season on Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. The Aquatics Division also started its Swim ATX program on Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. Swim ATX prepares students for the possibility of employment with the City of Austin and the YMCA. An instructor will make themselves available at a pool that is conveniently located in the district in which the school resides. **Districts 1 and 5.**

**Golf Enterprise Fund Revenue:** The Golf Enterprise Fund had resounding success in the first quarter of FY2021-22. As of December 31, 2021, the fund revenues were at 101% as compared to 2020-2021. This is particularly interesting because we are only budgeted for \$125,000 in the first quarter for general

fund transfers vs. \$250,000 in previous years. If you compare only over the counter revenue, fund revenues were at 106% (\$2,415,306). This continues to be an exciting time for golf.

**Zilker Botanical Garden:** The Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy, a Public/Private Partner with PARD, signed a Contract Amendment with the City that builds upon the success of the existing partnership. It has been reviewed and approved by Legal and will be submitted through the Contracts Office for Department Director signature.